

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

'LIGHT' AND THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

We beg to remind the Subscribers to 'Light,' and the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, who have not already renewed their Subscriptions for 1899, which are payable *in advance*, that they should forward remittances at once to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Their kind attention to this matter will save much trouble in sending out accounts, booking, postage, &c.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

'The Manchester Guardian' is an easy first among the fair and honest papers of England; but what does it mean by reporting a glaring case of swindling with the help of pretended spirit-manifestations, and heading the paragraph, 'Embezzlement and Spiritualism'? But, worse still, why does it begin its narrative by saying, 'John Mountstewart Young, spiritualist and poet, was charged on remand, &c.'? Even supposing the charges against him to be true, there is nothing in the story that connects him seriously with Spiritualism. He was simply a wholesale fraud—a thief, a forger, and a trickster. If some miserable scoundrel dressed up as a clergyman, and launched out upon a career of crime, would 'The Manchester Guardian' head a report of the trial with the words 'Embezzlement and the Church'? and would it say that 'The Rev. Jabez Balfour, clergyman and tract distributor, was charged on remand, &c.'? We do not ask much from respectable people. Our sole demand is summed up in the two short words—*Fair play*.

We sometimes think that, after all our little lovers' quarrels, no one admires and values the work of the Psychical Research Society more than we do. The poor world holds that certain things are simply 'impossible,' and therefore it does not matter who affirms them or demonstrates them. 'They are impossible': that settles it, and therefore, of course, the asserter or the demonstrator is a foolish person or a fraud—or, to be merciful, he is mad or misled on this particular subject. And, again of course, it does not matter whether it is John Smith or Sir William Crookes, Susan Grey or Dr. Hodgson:—'the thing is impossible, and there's an end on't.' You only show that you are incompetent, at the best.

So here is a certain 'R. P. Ellis' writing in 'The Ethical World' a long, long screed against Telepathy and Thought-transference, and he ends thus:—

Far be it from the present writer to blame the psychical statisticians. They have done all that they possibly could do.

It would be idle to set great tasks before individuals who have proved themselves unfit to undertake small ones. Any original observations or experiments they might undertake would surely betray the same want of genius which marred their labours throughout. The Society for Psychical Research has toiled in other fields, and has been, in its own estimation, successful. How could it be otherwise, since their attempts in those directions were uniformly marked by a childish simplicity? No one who has read of the work being done by numerous physiologists and psychophysicists can feel anything but wondering pity for experiments void of all that is considered thorough. The Creery children are exposed; and for some time now, it is well to remember, a Mr. G. A. Smith is the link between Mrs. Sidgwick, the usual controller of the experiments, and the indifferent class of individuals to whom he 'telepathically' transmits numbers and the like. Unknown as that gentleman is to the world, one may reasonably ask, on general grounds:

'Who is Smith? Ah! who is he
That all the world should trust him?'

The transparent honesty of those who conduct the telepathic experiments offers not a scintilla of assurance that they are properly equipped for their mission. Which of us would entrust a great Atlantic liner to the guidance of an individual whose honesty was unquestionable, but whose capacity for that task approached the zero-point? And who would hand over the conduct of experiments that are to revolutionise scientific conceptions to persons of such a type?*

And that is how a capital representative of 'the man in the street' treats, and naturally treats, the splendid truthseekers of The Psychical Research Society. Why the Sadducees and Scribes do not hit *us* much harder than that!

Even Convocation has to move when facts press upon it. There has been such a rapid growth of public opinion in favour of Cremation as against burial—and especially among those to whom the Church usually defers—that something *had* to be done to prevent people getting too accustomed to doing without 'benefit of clergy'; so we are at once surprised and delighted to find that Convocation has carried a resolution asking the bishops to provide either a revised Burial Service or a new Service for Cremations. This is a stupendous advance, and is a recognition of Cremation which few expected to see in our day. But the currents in many directions are running very strong.

'Expression' publishes several bright and thoughtful extracts 'from the diary of a student.' Slowly, the writer comes to the beautiful uplands where it is not only believed but felt and known that 'God is All in All,' and that therefore 'All is One and All is Good.' 'Can this be what I want?' asks the writer, 'Can this solve my trouble—my question as to how the thoughts that trouble are there at all?'

Then comes full comprehension and full faith; and then the record:—

How wonderful is the change which the realisation of what our being is has brought to me!

The wonderful joy with which life is flooded! As if a thick veil of darkness has been lifted from my eyes, so that

* I have made no reference to Mr. Gurney's 'Phantasms of the Living.' Compared with that work, the Census Report is a classic model of close observation and sound reasoning. The less said about it the better.

now I can see the beauty, which indeed was always there, but which I could not see.

I would like to tell everyone what a vast difference this wonderful knowledge of the Divine Spirit in all creation has made to me.

The music of the rushing river, the lovely movements of the swaying, trembling birches, the 'soughing' of the wind in the fir trees, all speak of the love and beauty and life of the Divine. The glorious sunset, brightest crimson, gorgeous orange, softest grey, express *more* Divine perfection. And most of all, the clear look in a child's eyes, or the soul seen through the faces of men and women, all reveal the *one* Divine Spirit. And do we not feel our oneness with *It*, realising *It* in ourselves by the joy with which we recognise *It* in All—the *Oneness* of All with God.

How this draws us all together in love! How harmonious everything is, where discord used to be! Joy fills us; we wonder to see the dull eye, the want of brightness and joy in others, while we are feeling full of it.

There is genuine thought in all this as well as vivid feeling. Our one great need is to penetrate beneath the body of Nature to its soul, and to ally ourselves with that. This is union with God.

It is too often taken for granted that the struggling folk who live in the poor districts of London are gin-sodden and vicious or callous. That is the prejudice of those who do not know. Those who do know are far more touched with the patience and tenderness of the poor than shocked at their wrong-doing or hardness of heart. They want understanding, and they need helping in the right way.

The following report of a late Exhibition of pictures in a poor district and intended for the poor, indirectly illustrates this:—

PICTURES EAST ENDERS PREFER.

The free picture exhibition opened in Canning Town by Mr. Val Prinsep, R.A., sixteen days ago, has closed, after having been visited by over 70,000 people, 25,000 of whom made their inspection of the collection between Good Friday and Easter Monday.

The exhibition was really a loan collection drawn from various sources, and contained some 250 pictures, many of them by artists of the highest standing. To test the appreciation of the visitors they were asked to write on a slip of paper the names of the three pictures they liked best.

The result of the ballot was to place Rudolph Blind's 'Christ the Consoler' an easy first, 'The Gambler's Wife,' by Marcus Stone, R.A., a good second, while third in order of appreciation came Lady Butler's 'Inkermann.'

'Christ the consoler'! It would astonish some people to know, to really know, how that is likely to go right home to the heart of the average costermonger, stoker, gasman, shunter. Perhaps the picture gallery has something to teach the Church.

CONDITIONS AT SEANCES.

In reply to 'C. J. G.' I would say that in my opinion the essential conditions for the earnest investigation of Spiritualism are sincerity, a love of truth, openness of mind, an absence of suspiciousness, respect for one's fellow-beings, a serious mind, consideration for others, a pure life and high aspirations: denying nothing, and believing nothing without clear evidence. If 'C. J. G.' doubts the honesty of a medium, he gives bad conditions, and ought not to sit with that medium. He has no right to doubt the honesty of anyone without clear evidence. If the phenomena given are not convincing enough for him, he can only suspend judgment and keep his wits about him. In addition to the conditions already given, certain others are also essential to the success of every sitting; namely, a suitable medium, and sitters psychically in harmony with each other, and animated by mutual feelings of goodwill. Further, if the sitters do not desire, before everything else, spiritual development, *i.e.*, to be made better men and women, the sittings will not result in any real good. Phenomena of certain kinds may be got, but not such as are profitable in the best sense.

J. S. HILL.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.—'LIGHT' may be obtained from Mr. W. H. Terry, Austral Buildings, Collins-street, E.

SOME MEDIUMISTIC EXPERIENCES.

ADDRESS BY MRS. BESSIE RUSSELL-DAVIES.

A social meeting of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance was held on Thursday, May 11th, in the Banqueting Room, St. James's Hall, when Mrs. BESSIE RUSSELL-DAVIES narrated to a large and appreciative audience some of her more notable experiences as a medium.

MR. E. DAWSON ROGERS, the President of the Alliance, in the course of some preliminary observations from the chair, said that Mrs. Davies was not only one of their most celebrated mediums, but one who had accomplished many years of mediumistic work without having any aspersion cast upon her character. That was a very great thing to say in these days when accusations of fraud were being levelled, justly or unjustly, against mediums in all directions.

In commencing her address, MRS. RUSSELL-DAVIES said she regarded herself as a life-long Spiritualist—indeed she was born a Spiritualist. As a public worker she had had an experience of nearly thirty years. If during that work she had been able to spread a knowledge of the truths that had come to her through Spiritualism, she was truly thankful, although taking no credit at all to herself.

She regarded her gifts as absolutely normal and natural; she could never look upon them as being in any way abnormal attributes. This was doubtless because they had, so to speak, grown up with her. But the longer she lived and the more experience she gained, the stronger was her conviction that all forms of mediumship alike were wholly normal and natural. In her own case her clairvoyance had taken the place of other gifts. She had little or no knowledge of languages, music, drawing, or other society accomplishments. But she had her gift of clairvoyance and would not exchange it for all the other gifts put together. At the same time she was very much surprised that there was so little clairvoyance developed amongst Spiritualists. Probably the faculty was present in many cases where its existence was unsuspected. She had, for instance, been told by medical men that certain patients had hallucinations, but she had proved time after time that these hallucinations were in reality clairvoyant visions.

Her own clairvoyance, Mrs. Davies said, was undoubtedly inherited. Her father's mother had possessed the faculty, and was accustomed to speak of her visions as quite an ordinary matter. Her father being also a seer, Mrs. Davies early in life acquired a thorough acquaintanceship with these psychical powers without, however, any knowledge of Spiritualism or the nature of mediumistic gifts. So far as she could remember she had seen clairvoyantly since the age of three. She and her family were then residing in Chester, and at the back of their house was a long garden which ended in a plantation. As a child she spent much of her time in this garden, and while there was often conscious of some unseen person walking by her side. She could distinctly hear the footsteps. By degrees she was able to see the person—the figure was that of a man. Her mother, on hearing the story, put the whole thing down to imagination. Some time afterwards, while walking in the plantation referred to, she observed a piece of white paper flutter down from amongst the trees overhead. That sheet of paper bore a written message of a character that could only have emanated from some one intimately acquainted with her family. This piece of paper Mrs. Davies conveyed to her mother, and the information it contained was acted upon, but proved to be altogether wrong and misleading. Why such a trick should have been played upon the family, Mrs. Davies said she was wholly unable to explain. She was at that time a child of three or four years of age, so that the message obviously did not emanate from herself.

Her next experience was the seeing of a mysterious face through the window of a church. While sitting one Sunday in one of the high old-fashioned pews of the period, she happened to glance up at one of the windows and beheld there, pressed against the glass, a most hideous face; she had never seen anything more malignant in appearance. She began to speculate whether it might not be the trick of someone outside, and on leaving the church she proceeded to investigate. But the window was a high one, and there was no ladder near by which anyone could have reached it.

Eventually she narrated the incident to her mother, who, instead of ridiculing the story (as might have been expected), called an elder sister of Mrs. Davies, and, having repeated the story, asked whether the description of the face recalled anything to her mind. This sister at once replied, 'I saw exactly the same face in the church at Llandeglon' (North Wales). Why this same face should have appeared thus to the two sisters was quite inexplicable.

Mrs. Davies' next experience was the hearing of voices in church. Frequently while at church she would hear the voices of invisible persons joining in the hymns and other exercises. But by this time she had acquired a certain knowledge of the presence and power of outside influences of some kind. Often in those days she and her family held séances of a sort, and used to get very good manifestations through the table. But at that time they were accustomed to address the table and not the spirits. The table, for instance, would be exhorted to 'lift up its leg and kick.' And this it would do in very vigorous fashion, thus providing them with an evening's amusement. Ultimately they procured raps, which increased in loudness until they resembled the blows of a sledge hammer.

It will be seen, therefore, that the experiences of Mrs. Davies' earlier life were well calculated to prepare her for later developments, although in those early days she knew nothing of Spiritualism as such. Before proceeding to consider these later experiences, Mrs. Davies gave an account of some striking phenomena which occurred on the evening of the passing away of her grandmother. Raps loud and continuous broke out in the room in which Mrs. Davies, who had retired for the night, was lying. Being but a child, she was greatly terrified, and ultimately, to allay her fears, her father carried her off to his room, where, to his astonishment, the mysterious knocks continued to sound as loudly as ever, nor did they cease until the medium's grandmother had expired.

The introduction of the medium to Spiritualism was preceded by the death of her mother, and was accompanied by some remarkable circumstances. Being in ill-health at the time, Mrs. Davies was put under the care of a doctor in whose house she went to reside. Here she was placed in bed, where it was understood she would have to remain for a fortnight. A few nights afterwards she heard mysterious sounds from the room below; sometimes it would be a number of raps—one, two, or three. On asking the doctor what was going on below, she was surprised to learn that he and his family had been holding séances at which spirit friends were, through the table, prescribing remedies for her! 'I thought it absurd,' said Mrs. Davies, 'because although I knew that the table would "lift up its leg and kick," I had never supposed that it was able to prescribe medicines.' When at last able to leave her bed, Mrs. Davies expressed her anxiety to be present at a séance, but this was peremptorily forbidden by the spirits, as it was considered that the state of her health would not permit of it. Subsequently the doctor's assistant, yielding to her entreaties, consented to a séance, the outcome of which was that 'the table rose up from the floor and knocked down the assistant!' Mrs. Davies fled precipitately, vowing to have nothing more to do with séances.

A few weeks afterwards she returned home. The state of her health made it necessary for her to retire at an early hour every night, and while lying in bed she observed that the house seemed abnormally quiet, for, as a rule, the younger members of the family were very noisy. Then came the discovery that after she retired for the night the family were in the habit of going off to a séance held for the investigation of Spiritualism, in the house of a neighbour. It was an extraordinary and significant coincidence that at the very time when the manifestations referred to were taking place at the doctor's house, Mrs. Davies' brothers and sisters were commencing their own investigations.

From this period Mrs. Davies dates the beginning of her development as a medium, for she joined the circle formed in part by her brothers and sisters, and they very soon procured movements of the table, including levitation without contact. She had frequently seen a large dining table rise from the floor to the ceiling without mortal contact and without any fully-developed medium being present. The circle eventually received a message from the unseen opera-

tors indicating that Mrs. Davies was developing clairvoyance, a fact which was soon tested by bandaging her eyes, when it was found that she could see the time marked by a clock in the room, although the hands were turned round at random by one of the sitters, who was careful to avoid the possibility of thought-transference by not observing where the hands of the clock were turned, the rest of the sitters (in accordance with the directions of the operating spirits) sitting in the meantime with closed eyes.

The enthusiasm of the medium and her friends was such that they sat 'morning, noon, and night,' and this did her great harm, the moral of which (said Mrs. Davies) is that the greatest mistake we can make in mediumship is to overdo it, because its exciting influence on the nervous system is very great.

Eventually she began to develop trance mediumship, and used to go into what were apparently epileptic fits. Two doctors were called in, who gravely pronounced the symptoms to be those of hysteria. These supposed fits were frequent and the usual restoratives were applied, with the result that the medium was greatly harassed and annoyed, until one day, when her brother was endeavouring to restore her during a 'fit,' she turned to him and said, 'Leave her alone; you are doing her harm.' That was spoken under spirit influence, the control being no other than Mrs. Davies' mother. 'I wanted nothing more than that,' said Mrs. Davies. 'I was satisfied that my mother was about and in her hands I felt perfectly safe.'

At a séance held subsequently they were told, by the operating spirits, that, although they had never previously sat in the dark, they were on this occasion to turn out the gas and make the room as dark as they could. Having by this time learned to obey orders, they proceeded to carry out the directions given. The room was made perfectly dark, and eventually the sitters were astonished to behold a spirit light which gradually developed until the form of Mrs. Davies' mother was revealed, so fully and palpably materialised that she was visible to all present, the only apparent difference between the character of the materialised form and that of a person still in the flesh being that the materialisation was luminous and transparent. Naturally such a manifestation as this made a great impression upon the sitters, who consisted of Mrs. Davies, her three brothers, and three neighbours. Although this happened twenty-five years ago, and she had had many experiences since, Mrs. Davies stated that she had never witnessed any materialisation equal to that of her mother. About this time the first number of the 'Medium and Daybreak' appeared, and she wrote to the late Mr. James Burns, the editor, recounting the experience. In this connection Mrs. Davies said she wished to express her gratitude for the advice and assistance received from Mr. Burns, who had always treated her with the greatest kindness. She was only too happy to have this opportunity of publicly avowing her feelings in regard to him, and the great respect she entertained for his memory.

Thus commenced Mrs. Davies' career as a Spiritualist; but before long difficulties developed. She went to reside in Birmingham with a sister, and while passing along the streets she was surprised to find herself bowing to numbers of people whom it seemed to her that she knew. Her sister who accompanied her, remarked on this strange conduct, the stranger inasmuch as the people whom Mrs. Davies greeted apparently, to the sister, had no existence. It became so embarrassing that at last the medium decided not to recognise anybody whom she met in the streets, whether in the flesh or out of it. This again led to difficulties, since actual friends and acquaintances were passed without greeting, and moreover it dawned upon the medium that she was beginning to lose the faculty of distinguishing between mortals and spirits. She appealed to spirit friends for advice, and was bidden to exert her will, and maintain her individuality against the influences which she permitted to obscure her perceptions. She was shown that she had been devoting too much time and attention to psychical matters, with injurious results. She acted upon the advice, and found that her clairvoyance was largely under the direction of her will. If she did not think about it she did not 'see,' but if she wished to exercise her clairvoyance she could do so.

Mrs. Davies then gave an interesting account of the

circumstances under which she developed the gift of medical clairvoyance, the whole anatomy of the human body being one day displayed to her through her clairvoyant vision for educational purposes. She valued this gift of medical diagnosis above everything, because she had found it of the greatest service.

In this connection Mrs. Davies related a remarkable case in which, having accurately foreseen the death of a patient, in opposition to the belief of a number of medical men—including specialists—she had afterwards witnessed the transition of the spirit from the physical form. This patient was a City gentleman who had an intense fear of death, but this was eventually overcome during his last illness by the proofs of spirit existence and power afforded to him through Mrs. Davies' mediumship. On the night of his passing over, Mrs. Davies, in her home, clairvoyantly beheld all the circumstances attending his departure. On the following day his son called upon the medium, who, without waiting for him to deliver his message, described to him the death-bed scene, which, much astonished, he admitted was absolutely correct in every detail.

As to the interior side of the transition scene, as described by Mrs. Davies, it is worthy of note that it coincided exactly with the descriptions of other seers. The dim cloud passing from the body and slowly assuming the shape of the mortal body, its floating in the air above the physical form, and its final separation when the last link between the two was broken, were vividly portrayed. In the instance under notice, the mother of the dying man and 'Dewdrop' (Mrs. Davies' spirit-guide) were present to receive and welcome the new-born spirit, who recognised and greeted his mother even before passing from the physical body.

Following this, Mrs. Davies gave an instance of the extraordinary psychometric and clairvoyant powers exercised through her mediumship by her guide 'Dewdrop.' She once received a letter from Austria stating that certain personages connected with the Austrian Court were investigating Spiritualism, and wished a test through her mediumship. Having expressed her willingness to accede to their desire, she in due course received a letter containing an envelope, securely sealed, in the interior of which was a written communication. This piece of writing was to be read and translated by the medium's spirit-guides without opening the envelope. For some time she hesitated over the test, feeling exceedingly diffident regarding the experiment. However, at last 'Dewdrop' said that it was time to make an effort to decipher the contents of the package. Having clairvoyantly analysed the character of the communication, and found that it was in a foreign tongue, the control departed for assistance and returned with five ancient looking spirits. The medium was then directed to write down a communication which would be dictated to her. This was done in a strange language, the medium being told how to spell the words, and in addition to this she was told to write five names to be added to the message. 'Dewdrop' then said that the message might be despatched to Austria, and this the medium did, not without a certain amount of trepidation, fearing a failure. However, five days afterwards a letter was received from Austria in reply, expressing the most unbounded astonishment at the results. It appeared that the original message was written in ancient Magyar, a language not only obsolete but known to only a few living scholars. But the strangest part of all was the fact that the five names added to the translated message were those of bygone members of the Hungarian family who wished for the test to be given—people who had lived two centuries ago.

Mrs. Davies then related how Mr. W. T. Stead had invoked her aid as a medium in the case of a lady who was in great trouble over the loss of her son. He was not dead, but had been missing for some eighteen months. Two envelopes addressed in the handwriting of the boy were given to her, and with this magnetic clue she traced him from place to place, observed his wanderings, and ultimately found him in a distant part of the world. She then reported the result, and added that if the family of the missing boy concentrated their minds upon him and endeavoured to bring him back, he would return within a certain time. Ultimately she had a letter from Mr. Stead saying that the boy had returned. The strange part of the story is that the

boy, who was in Australia when clairvoyantly discovered by Mrs. Davies, failing to succeed there, determined to return to a seafaring life. The captain of a vessel offered him a berth, provided he would sign articles for three years, and this the boy was willing to do. A series of obstacles sprang up in a most curious manner, and again and again something intervened to prevent the bargain being struck. The boy grew suddenly homesick, and eventually took a passage home, returning to his mother within two days of the time in which the medium had predicted that he would return.

The last two instances narrated by Mrs. Davies were given to illustrate the detective powers of 'Dewdrop.' In the first case, two ladies had called upon Mrs. Davies for a séance. One, being aggressively sceptical, had loudly proclaimed her disbelief in the whole business, and having kept her identity a secret, defied 'Dewdrop' to discover who she was. 'Dewdrop' replied that she would follow the visitor home and ascertain for herself. In the result, the lady received next day a letter from Mrs. Davies, to whom her sceptical visitor's name and address had been communicated by the spirit.

The second instance related to a red morocco pocket-book which had been sent anonymously to Mrs. Davies, the sender taking every precaution to conceal the origin of the gift. The donor was not a little startled to receive a prompt acknowledgment of the present, Mrs. Davies having been furnished with the requisite particulars by the vigilant 'Dewdrop.'

Mrs. Davies, in concluding her interesting address, expressed the opinion that there was virtually no limit to the powers of spirits in these matters, but to be successful they must deal with persons having mediumistic powers. She had known many cases of failure on the part of spirits to gather needed particulars, but in all these cases the persons they visited were without mediumistic qualities.

The address was received with much applause, and the customary resolution of thanks was passed at the instance of the President.

MISS MACCREADIE, whose public clairvoyance at Cavenish Rooms has brought her name into considerable repute, then gave a series of clairvoyant delineations from the platform. Nearly every description was at once recognised, and in one special case, not acknowledged at the moment, a lady afterwards sought an interview for the purpose of explaining that though she had not the courage to rise at once and say so, the description, though apparently intended for a gentleman near whom she sat, was clearly intended for herself, as she fully identified the friends described, and the names given by Miss MacCreadie were perfectly correct. Miss MacCreadie is to be cordially congratulated on her success, and the interest of the audience was shown by the fact that this part of the evening's proceedings was prolonged beyond the period at first allotted to it.

A pianoforte duet (Overture: 'Ruy Blas') was given by the Misses Withall during the evening, the grand piano used on the occasion having been kindly lent by the Messrs. Brinsmead.

IN MEMORIAM.

Another of our veterans has passed on. Mr. Newton Crosland, of 29, Ondine-road, East Dulwich, departed this life on the 18th inst. at the ripe age of eighty. He was one of the first in this country to espouse the cause of Spiritualism, and was to the end a valiant 'defender of the faith,' with so much confidence in the soundness of his own convictions that he had little patience with those who differed from him. Reincarnation was always a 'red rag' to him, and the last letter which he wrote to 'LIGHT,' and which appears in this week's issue over the signature of 'Trident,' shows his attitude in relation to that question. Mrs. Newton Crosland, who had predeceased him about four years, will be remembered as having achieved some literary reputation under her maiden name of Camilla Toulmin.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- C. A. M.—Yes. We have full particulars as to the authenticity of the communication over the signature of 'Justice' in last week's 'LIGHT.'
- J. F. C., Mme. la Générale Noël, 'Via Lucis,' J.M., A.J., and B.H.—Thanks. Your communications shall have immediate attention.

'CONDITIONS.'

Not only 'Earnest Investigators' but also convinced Spiritualists of many years' standing would be glad if the term 'conditions' could be defined with the accuracy and exactitude desired by 'C.J.G.' in 'LIGHT' of May 13th.

The term is used amongst us with the elasticity and vagueness complained of, simply because it has to cover such a vast tract of ignorance. At present we know so little of the state of existence of the beings whose presence is demonstrated to us at séances, and of the means they use to give us the various phenomena, that it is impossible for us to have more than a dim perception of their requirements in the way of 'conditions.' Very often, questions are asked by us upon these points, and attempts made by the controls to answer them, which, more frequently than not, result in bringing us face to face with a blank wall, beyond which our present want of comprehension prevents us from penetrating. This seems, at first, very baffling and disappointing, but so it has been all along the line of human progress. The little revealed and understood by us only makes us conscious of the vast beyond, to which we cannot yet reach. Even He whom we esteem as the greatest of Teachers had to declare to those whom He Himself had trained, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' Still, the more our natures stretch themselves out towards what seems at present unattainable to them, the surer and swifter will be their progress towards it. But it will take a long further course of experimental work before we get to know all the governing causes of séance conditions, and even when we have learned so much the underlying reasons upon which the action of these causes is based will, probably, still remain to seek.

So far as we have yet been led to understand, the quality of the conditions at séances depends upon a great number of subtle circumstances.

1st. Place has its effect. In consequence of the aura hanging about a room, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain phenomena in it. Mr. Stead once told me that he had, just before, taken part in a séance with a good medium under what seemed good conditions, without getting any results. At length he was induced by the other sitters to withdraw to another room to ask 'Julia' the cause of the failure. She at once wrote that an all-night sitting would be of no use in that room, because of the adverse aura obtaining there. I myself once occupied two rooms in a Swiss hotel, one of which faced the Mont Blanc range, whilst the other had but a side view of it. Naturally, I made the former my sitting-room; but I was never allowed to try for automatic writing in that room, as my controls told me its aura was inimical to them. I never could find out why. I was, also, once enabled to obtain a long automatic communication by the favourable aura of the place I was in, when in a state of exhaustion, personally, which, otherwise, would have prevented any writing being given.

2nd. Times and seasons have also their bearing upon the conditions of séances. By which I mean, for instance—to take a large case—that periods of great perturbation of the public mind would not probably be found conducive to successful séances. It is, very likely, in consequence of this factor that so many of us choose Sundays for holding séances, the surrounding calm, we feel, being helpful to us. Under this heading, too, considerations of weather must come in. Extremes both of heat and cold seem to be detrimental to the conditions, to which, also, wet weather appears to be less favourable than dry.

3rd. There are very many circumstances connected with the personalities of the sitters which affect the results of a séance. Defiant and determined scepticism on the part of any present is, of course, very detrimental. An earnest desire to investigate and to keep a free and open mind, when really acted up to (a consummation oftener asserted than attained), although it may make the conditions a little more difficult for the controls to deal with than an attitude of conviction, is not prohibitive of results. Indeed, I suppose that all Spiritualists, after the many attempts at fraud which have been exposed, go to séances determined to keep on the alert and not to accept the phenomena as genuine without due proof. Nevertheless, there is a distinct difference

in their attitude of mind from that of the most earnest investigator—a difference which, by reason of its including some knowledge of what can be and a faith in possibilities, makes more favourable conditions than can be supplied by those without the pale.

It may be that in a circle there is nothing in any of the sitters, individually, antagonistic to results, and yet none are obtained, because the various auras cannot be assimilated into an harmonious whole to be worked upon by the controls. Sometimes, change of seats may help in such a case, but sometimes, again, it may be necessary entirely to reconstitute the circle by the withdrawal of some sitters and the substitution of others, in order thus to equalise the number of negatives and positives present. Occasionally it happens that the aura of a single person present may be inimical to the general conditions, and this through no attitude of mind, but simply from a constitutional state. Mr. George Spriggs, of Melbourne, when in London, some years ago, in the course of a public relation of his mediumistic experiences said that there was an earnest Spiritualist whose aura, or magnetism, was so inimical to him personally that not only was his presence at any séance at which Mr. Spriggs was the medium prohibitive of phenomena, but also an evening séance would be unfavourably affected by his having been in the séance room during the day. It is well known that the presence of two or three fully-developed mediums at a séance, instead of strengthening the power and increasing the phenomena, often has the contrary effect. I do not know whether it is possible as yet entirely to explain the cause of this, although I have heard several reasons given.

A temporary state of mind, or condition of body of one of the sitters, or of the medium, may also unfavourably affect results. Even the vocation in life of one of the sitters may have a bad effect upon a séance. I well remember how once I and some other sitters were greatly distressed during a séance by the condition introduced through a person present, who was officially connected with a lunatic asylum, although I did not know the cause until afterwards. All the phenomena that evening were erratic, broken, or disturbed. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to convey to those who are not sensitive to conditions the unpleasantness caused to others who are so, by any want of harmony in these. Also, I must here take the opportunity of saying that an unsuccessful séance is far more exhausting to the medium and the sitters than a successful séance. The reason of this seems to be that, under unfavourable conditions, the controls are constantly drawing power from those present, in the hope of ultimate success; whereas, with favourable conditions, they only draw intermittently, taking as much as they need for the production of the phenomena they have in view, and then using that up before drawing more for fresh phenomena.

Other causes of unfavourable conditions I may mention are too much eagerness on the part of any of the sitters for certain particular manifestations, and contradictory wishes amongst the circle. As much as possible passivity of mind should be maintained, personal desires should be effaced, and the controls left to do what they can, in the way they think best.

As a matter of course, amongst all these various causes of failure it is often exceedingly difficult, at an unsuccessful séance, to discover that which is preventing the phenomena. Especially is this so, as even the controls do not always seem to know why their efforts do not succeed. In this case all that can be done is to experiment with changes. But not for very long, as an unsuccessful séance should soon be brought to a close.

I feel I have—and that very slightly—but touched the fringe of this difficult subject. I confess, too, I have left some important points severely alone, because of the immense difficulty in writing upon them. But I hope that where I felt I should fail, others will prove successful.

MARY MACK WALL.

London, S.W.

BUT if, whatever you seek, you put *good-will* into all your actions, you are sure of the best success at last; for, whatever else you gain or miss, you are building up a noble and beautiful character, which is not only the best of possessions in this world, but also is about all you can expect to take with you into the next.—J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

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EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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REINCARNATION OR ASSOCIATION?

On more than one occasion we have suggested a *modus vivendi* between Theosophists and Spiritualists in relation to Reincarnation. We are very far from admitting the validity of the Theosophist's arguments in favour of Reincarnation, and we do not feel the force of many of his difficulties, but there are curious anomalies in human life which undoubtedly are not entirely accounted for by the little we know of heredity on the one hand and sheer obsession on the other. But we have always held that the doctrines of Heredity and Evolution were a sufficient guide amid these anomalies, sufficient at least to give us a practical working theory in relation to the complex and fluctuating personalities that make up the human race: and we have held also that the notion of Reincarnation cuts right across these fundamental doctrines, and introduces into human development a process which is at once a physical monstrosity and a moral and spiritual waste.

Significantly enough, our issue for last week contained a fair specimen of the Reincarnationist's case and an undesigned indication of the alternative. The Reincarnationist builds his theory upon such undoubted facts as the striking diversities of character and capacity in young children, and upon such frail ground as intuition and dream. But intuition, so far as we can trace its cause, is only the inherited results of experience—as it is in what we call the 'lower' animals—or the exercise of the finer faculties. To assume that the thinking spirit must have had a prior personal existence because it has ideas, or because it plays curious tricks in dreams, is to go far towards inference that is fanciful and arbitrary, instead of inference that is 'obvious and incontestable' in favour of reincarnation.

'Excelsior' truly says that 'almost innumerable are the difficulties which arise in investigating the anomalous contradictions presented by every aspect of earthly life,' but these 'anomalous contradictions' are found everywhere throughout nature, and not more in relation to human life than to 'lower' animal life or the lives of trees and plants of every kind. Nature and human nature are on pilgrimage, and Evolution and Heredity tell us why and how.

But, it is said, justice demands that if a human being suffers its suffering must be the result of a previous existence. Does it? If then a donkey suffers, and is doomed to an endlessly overweighted barrow instead of to a princeling's pet carriage, is *that* because, in some previous existence, the costermonger's donkey was one that would not go? If not, why not? Why should a donkey suffer, any more than the equally overworked costermonger? The same question might be asked concerning the fish in polluted

streams, or of the fruit trees struggling for life in an orchard now hard-pressed by the growing and evil-odoured town.

The question of the possession of precocious faculties deserves, we confess, more serious treatment; but here again there are suggestions from purely normal causes, turning upon the curious march of Evolution and the subtle flow of Heredity, which absolve us from resorting to the cumbrous and fearfully puzzling notion of Reincarnation. And truly, again, we see the same phenomenon all through Nature. The great and ever-active Mother always seems to be trying experiments, putting out here and there a feeler in a new direction or evolving some special specimen of something she wants to survive. It is her way. There is no need to resort to any subtle theory of justice or to any monstrous notion such as that of rebirth. The cattle-breeder and the scientific gardener know perfectly well what we mean. The 'lower' animals and plants have their precocities, too, and their singular diversities of temperament, character and destiny: and the whole of it proceeds on the old lines of Evolution and Heredity, with a strange suggestion of interference or guidance which Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace long ago noticed, which the Duke of Argyll lately pointed out, and which, in a somewhat novel way, Mr. Thurstan last week indicated. And just here comes the meeting-place or *modus vivendi*.

We told our theosophical friends long ago that we could meet them something like half way. We can quite understand that the unseen people are very active indeed in attaching themselves to and using the seen people: and we are not at all indisposed to agree that in many cases precocity may indicate a sort of possession: and this may be quite in harmony with Evolution which may be helped from the unseen in its working, and with Heredity which may be like a stream that can be utilised in its flow. If a young person exhibits a very wonderful talent for music or painting or mathematics or electrical engineering, is it not at least as likely that he is being used as an instrument by some teacher and inspirer who is helping on the world as that he is an old spirit who has been crammed into Mrs. Jones' baby's body?

We think Mr. Thurstan's paper deserves very careful consideration. It is on safe spiritual lines; it is practical; it is, for the present, sufficient; and, certainly, it states nothing that interferes with natural law, for inspiration is a universal law of nature, and the use of instruments is a common-place of daily life.

A PARISIAN 'HEALER' IN TROUBLE.

The French police have strict orders to prevent quacks or other unauthorised persons from practising as medical practitioners. This is the reason why they have recently paid a domiciliary visit to the latest fashionable faith-healer in Paris. He professes to owe his supposed miraculous powers to the direct intervention of St. Paul. A Mexican by birth, he has various physical deformities which add to his strange appearance. The consulting-room which he opened a few months ago in the Rue Cadet has been besieged. He does not possess any miraculous drug nor infallible specific, but contents himself with submitting his patients to magnetic passes. He was thus employed when the police magistrate entered his consulting-room. The patients present protested indignantly against this untimely interference, and assured the magistrate with remarkable unanimity of the reality of the 'doctor's' powers. When he takes his trial for practising illegally as a doctor he will not only be defended by Maître Frédéric Allain, the eminent barrister, but evidence will be given in his favour by quite a number of Parisian celebrities, including Madame Emma Calvé, Mlle. Cléo de Mérode, and several journalists and artists who have consulted him with surprising results.—'Westminster Gazette.'

THEOSOPHY IN AMERICA.

There are three societies now in America, offshoots of the original society. These divisions originated in continual contentions and personal differences between the leaders. Colonel Olcott is the head of the original society, with Mr. A. Fullerton as general secretary here. The first split occurred when Mrs. Besant made charges of fraud against Mr. Judge. The American society did not believe in these charges and declared their autonomy in 1895. Mr. Judge was made president, but died a year after. Mr. Hargrove took his place in 1896. Mr. Hargrove and Mrs. Tingley went on a crusade around the world, but discord arose, and on their return a division occurred. Mr. Hargrove resigned and Mrs. Tingley called a convention in Chicago, and constituted the 'Universal Brotherhood.' She had a resolution passed appointing her head and placing absolute control in her hands, retaining the power to expel members without trial. This was disapproved of by many, who split off in protest against the absolute power vested in Mrs. Tingley. They formed the Theosophical Society of America, under the leadership of Dr. Buck.

There is now a movement to save what can be saved from the wreck. It is an independent effort to endeavour to arrive at a better understanding among those who are willing to work for the cause and not for self. But the societies are opposed to each other and will not come together. Consequently it will be members only who will meet, as individuals, and consider whether it is necessary to organise a new society.

The main lesson to be learned from the mistakes of the past work is that personal prominence and consequent adulation are most dangerous, leading to ambition replacing right motive.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. J. M. PRYSE.

Asked whether they still believed in Adept-Masters, Mr. Pryse replied in the affirmative. Several members claimed to have met them, notably Colonel Olcott, Damodar, and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, who affirmed having met them in physical bodies. Others had seen them clairvoyantly, he believed, but such claims were never made publicly. Mr. Pryse could not define the distinction differentiating such subjective perception from that of the spirit forms seen by Spiritualists.

Questioned as to whether he was aware that the Mental Science which has assumed such an extension in America, is fundamentally akin to Yoga, Mr. Pryse acknowledged that that was so but disapproved of such knowledge being applied in action apart from ethical basis, or for payment. In reply to the remark that therapeutic application was unquestionably an ethical practice, and that the position of the practitioners who earned a livelihood in exchange for their work (two of them notably, though earning large incomes, retaining but little, and giving it out again in support of progressive literature and reviews) differed but little from that of some theosophical leaders, Mr. Pryse answered that 'motive' was the only criterion. Asked whether occult powers had been developed among the members apart from the leaders who claimed to possess such, Mr. Pryse replied that he does not know any occultist among the members of the society. In his circular he says: 'We are none of us occultists and let us honestly say so. Let us free ourselves from the pitfalls of all mock secrecy and mysterious pretences to occult learning.'

Mrs. Tingley is clairvoyant but Mr. Pryse could not deny that it was stated that she was a public medium before becoming a Theosophist. He must leave that statement to be dealt with by those who claimed to be acquainted with the fact.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. FULLERTON.

'We claim to be the only Theosophists in America,' said Mr. Fullerton. 'We do not acknowledge the other two societies. They have no right to use our name. One of them has made Theosophy absurd in the eyes of the community and discredited it by sensational procedure. We can have nothing to do with them; they are already disintegrating. The society of Mr. Bucks stands on a higher moral basis, however.'

'Theosophy rests for its foundation on the Wisdom Religion, on the principles of Universal Brotherhood, and on the direct testimony of those great souls, the Masters, as to the Unseen Universe. Our evidence as to the existence of these Masters rests on the testimony of Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant, who have seen them in their astral and in their physical bodies. The information with regard to the unseen universe is supported by the testimony of such students as

Mr. Leadbeater and Mr. Sinnott. None of our students here have to my knowledge developed occult powers.'

'As to any comparison between the clairvoyance evolved in psychics, we consider that students of Theosophy evolve higher faculties than clairvoyance; spiritual faculties which demand moral and spiritual development as their basis. Even where the faculty of exteriorisation appears in psychics, we still consider that Theosophy lays stress on larger, broader faculties. It explains them more fully and gives the rationale, based on the doctrine of the seven principles of man.'

Mr. Fullerton could not reply with regard to the means of distinguishing the perception of the astral forms of the Masters from spirit forms, as seen by mediums. He has not examined the difference between Yoga and Mental Science. The works on the latter subject appear to him to be wanting in definiteness and conciseness.

Dr. Paul Gibier, head of the Pasteur Institute in New York, was personally acquainted, from 1885 to 1887, with 'Marchal' in Paris, the magnetiser whose subject Madame Blavatsky was for some time, before she appeared as a medium in Cairo or as a Spiritualist in New York. This confirms the statements of Madame de Morsier, of the venerable M. Bessac, of M. Schure, of M. Solovyoff.

Such training will undoubtedly have developed her natural psychic gifts and mediumship, which, as Colonel Olcott recognises, she possessed from childhood. Dr. Ferroul's subject, 'Anna,' was another instance in which natural psychic faculties became trained to a wonderful degree; far more so than is known to the public.

Further, mediums of superior ability can, after considerable practice, relate their own psychic stratum by exerting introspective concentration. They thus become their own operator and subject, and evolve quite different experiences and phenomena from those pertaining to mediumship proper. Mrs. Barrett (wife of the Editor of the 'Banner of Light') tells of such a case; Mr. Wiggin, the inspirational speaker, knows of another instance. The existence of a strong psychic element is the qualification for the development of occult powers, and if mediums studied the methods of concentration of Mental Science (occultism divested of secrecy and mysteriousness), they could bring their gifts under their own control to a considerable extent, and effect self-suggestion. They could thus live either in the inner or the outer earth plane at choice, the here or the beyond, and thus demonstrate the presence in man of the link which constitutes the basis of continuity in experience between the now and the hereafter.

It is much to be regretted that Madame Blavatsky marred her real faculties by enshrouding them with false pretences. As it is she did much useful service, but her influence for good would otherwise have been much greater. And yet let us not criticise. Which of us is without faults? And she was a medium, and subject to extra temptations consequently.

Q.V.

THE TYING OF MEDIUMS.

In 'LIGHT' of May 13th, 'Looker On' asks: 'How shall we ever learn of Divine Mysteries if we doubt each other?' and I ask in return: 'Why not tie all mediums?' then doubt would die for want of nourishment, and the doubter's mind would be set at rest, so that he might attend to whatever phenomenon occurred. It is objected that mediums are too sensitive to be treated in such a harsh manner, but they appear to think it does not hurt them to know that the majority of their fellow creatures doubt them, and say cruel things about them, and about those who believe in them. If due courtesy and respect were used in the tying, and if some of the best and most trusted mediums willingly set the example of being tied, then the honest would come through triumphant, and the others would receive the punishment they deserve.

'NON-DOUBTER.'

THE path to success may lie through devious and uncertain ways, through evil report and good report, through denials and defeats, but to an absorbing enthusiasm it is as assured in final result as the course of the sun in the heavens. A fixed, definite purpose not only leads to success; it is success.—MISS LILIAN WHITING.

THE PROBLEM OF MORAL EVIL, VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF MAN'S DIVINE HEREDITY.

'Know, O son of Pritha ! that I am the eternal seed of all things that exist. I am the intellect of the intelligent and the splendour of the splendid.'—*'Bhagavad-Gita.'*

If all this universe is nothing else than a manifestation of the Divine All-pervading Spirit, how are we to regard what we call moral evil? Is it a positive or a negative? Is it to be tolerated and condoned as *a part of all that is*? Or is its presence to be felt to be a challenge, and an incentive to the active exercise of man's highest faculties of will and choice? Certain aspects of modern art rather favour the notion that moral evil and physical ugliness are to be not only tolerated, but are even to be regarded as equally fit subjects for contemplation and study with beauty and goodness. Happily a divine instinct within every normally healthy nature asserts itself emphatically against such a proposition, and impels the heart, which trusts intuition rather than argument, to admire the good and beautiful and hate badness and ugliness.

It may be asked, What place have these questions in a journal devoted to the study of Spiritualism? The tone of the leading articles in 'LIGHT' leads us to believe that the Editor agrees with us in thinking that the question, 'How am I to regard moral evil?' has upon the student of Spiritualism very urgent and particular claims. To anyone who recognises the spiritual nature of man, and all that this implies as to his origin and his destiny, it is an appalling experience vividly to realise facts of moral evil, such as those, for instance, which are brought before us in an article on 'Habitual Inebriates' in this month's 'Contemporary.' To turn directly from the glorious vision of the Divine Sonship of Humanity, as spirit begotten of Spirit, to that heart-rending revelation of the degradation of men and women, brings one face to face with a contrast acute, revolting, terrible. And yet if our faith in the ultimate destiny of man is to be held at all, it must be held in the full consciousness of these terrible facts: if the realisation of *these* loosens our hold on *that*, then our profession of faith is worthless; our hope for humanity and for ourselves is bound up with our hope for every member of the race. It has been well said, 'A belief is a strand in the cord of our lives that runs through every fathom of it.' If we can face the fact of these hundreds of lives sunk in degradation and animalism, and still affirm, 'I believe that the Divine nature is in man; that God is the Father of these; and that their destiny and mine is union with Him,' then, and only then, may we dare to hope that the visions of glory which belief in the spiritual origin of humanity opens to us are a substance, not a dream; that the belief is in itself an 'evidence' of the reality of 'things (as yet) unseen.'

The following thoughts which have helped the writer of this article in facing this appalling contradiction, may help others. Of course, they are very far indeed from being a complete answer to the questions raised; they are merely a contribution to thought, which again and again turns back upon this problem with distress and perplexity.

All created things are in varying degrees manifestations of the Infinite Parent Spirit—that is our starting point.

The human body and human intelligence are splendid manifestations of Divine Power and Thought; man, whether he wills it or no, is a manifestation of *these* attributes of the Infinite Spirit; he has no choice in this regard; even the most degraded being has a body quite marvelously organised, every portion of which is an expression of a Thought of God and manifests His Intelligence. But intelligence is not the highest attribute of the Divine Spirit; will, truth, love, these are His essential characters. The human soul is the channel through which these can be expressed, that is to say, humanity is intended to be the image of the Eternal Morality of God. When the Divine Breath descended into flesh and entered into union with the psychic creature, man became a vast capacity for God; for the Divine Parent imparted to humanity the potentiality of will and capacity to choose, which involves the capability of being filled with the fulness of the Divine Character. Humanity's true function being this, harmony of being and blessedness are only possible for any man in proportion as

he fulfils his destiny, and is attuned to God's ideal for him. Confusion and moral disease must result whilst any individual fails to be, what in the Divine Mind he is intended to be, that is, a channel through which God's Character, His Purity and Love, can manifest.

But in a large number the capacity for God is latent rather than active, inasmuch as the faculty of choice is undeveloped. No being can manifest the Divine Will, *i.e.*, his preference for Goodness and Beauty, unless he has a faculty whereby to discern and to prefer. It is not possible to consider attentively the lives of many of the wild, unrestrained beings in our midst and not to recognise that in most of them this faculty of will is almost in abeyance; their actions are not the result of choice; they are often an almost automatic response to some external suggestion, or they are the outcome of some animal impulse due to heredity. These constitute what is called the criminal class; they are at present little more developed than animals, although within them lies hidden the Divine Capacity, waiting to be liberated.

Dare we, then, accuse them of sin? For is not sin a defection of will, a wrong exercise of the faculty of choice—a faculty which in them is undeveloped and inoperative? And if this is so, why do we instinctively and rightly shrink with repugnance and a sense of shame at the thought of their animalism? 'Sin lieth at the door'; but at whose door? Who are those who block the way and hinder the manifestation of the glory of God's character? It is hardly these poor untrained beings, with the heavy chain of hereditary passions, with the glaring allurements of ginshops awaiting them at every street corner, and poverty and low influences around them in their families. Is it not rather the more developed sons of God, whose minds have been taught to discern the capabilities of man and the purpose of God, whose wills have been trained to choose, and who cannot fail to know how present social conditions render the fulfilment of that purpose impossible for thousands? It is the indifference, the apathy, of spirits who recognise their origin, whether they call themselves Christian, or Spiritualist, or both; it is this which constitutes the greatest crime, and it is at the door of these that sin lies, because, whilst preferring goodness and beauty for themselves, they tolerate the conditions which make it impossible for thousands of souls to exercise the faculty of preference at all. The degradation of these thousands is a vicarious suffering; for us and for our salvation they at present suffer loss, in order that in us may be developed the Divine elements of pity and sympathy. The saving character of God is seeking to force a channel through *our* slow-moving souls by which His love may pass to rescue and to raise these imprisoned spirits; and because we often resist this Divine pressure impelling us to suffer in their degradation, and wilfully ignore or thoughtlessly forget their misery, we grow opaque to the Divine rays, and our condition becomes more sinful and more perilous, more truly evil, than the lowest sensuality of the undeveloped.

What can we do? We are not all called to go out into the streets to save, as does the writer of the article to which we referred; but we can at least open our heart to the tides of Divine intolerance and desire to become channels of His Thought and Feeling towards these dark facts, to think His thoughts regarding them; if we do this, indifference will vanish, and, saturated with the Divine Spirit, we shall become, what we are meant to be, perpetual manifestations of *God's intolerance of moral evil*.

For many of us, perhaps for all, the only way out of obscurity and doubt as to the character of the Source of our being lies through this intolerance of evil, this perpetual enthusiasm on behalf of the thousands of unborn children of God whose Divine evolution is, under present social conditions, impossible; for until we have this witness within we shall never understand the Divine Character. Of course the question suggests itself: 'Why, if God hates evil, does He wait to deliver? Why does He not manifest His saving love without us?' One can but indicate the direction in which this question finds an answer, and leave it to individual consideration. The clue to the problem lies probably in the wondrous fact of the essential unity of God and man, a fact which we at present but dimly apprehend. As we think deeply into it we catch a glimpse of the reason why

God will not, *cannot*, fulfil His purpose for Humanity, except through Humanity; and we also apprehend in some degree the truth that every thrill of pity, every feeling of hatred of evil, is God Himself in us, forcing a passage for the Manifestation of His Character. Our very sense of oppression at the problem of evil becomes our best evidence as to what God's essential character is, and we can fall back upon that very oppression and find in it evidence of the nature of the Being from whom all life proceeds; evidence which, being within, will sustain us when the problems that meet us from without prompt that most terrible form of doubt, doubt as to the perfect Goodness and Morality of God. H.A.D.

116, King Henry's-road, N.W.

P.S.—The close logical connection between the ideals of Spiritualism and work for the elevation of the lowest strata of society is clearly recognised by Professor Alfred Wallace, as is evident from the character of the address delivered by him at the Congress last year.

PRESENTATION TO MR. AND MRS. WALLIS.

Mr. E. W. Wallis (who has for many years ably guided the 'Two Worlds' from the Editorial chair, and as business manager and secretary for the 'Two Worlds' Publishing Company, Limited), being about to take up an appointment in London, the directors of the 'Two Worlds' Publishing Company invited him and Mrs. Wallis, with a few friends, to be their guests on Tuesday, May 16th, at the Tweedale Restaurant, Manchester.

MR. TOMLINSON (Chairman of the Directors), after the company had partaken of an enjoyable repast, rose and said: Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Wallis having resigned the Editorship of the 'Two Worlds,' and being about to remove to London, the directors desired to make him some little present in token of their personal esteem and appreciation of the services he has so ably rendered for the long period of twelve years as Editor and business manager. Had it not been for Mr. Wallis I do not think the 'Two Worlds' paper would have been in existence to-day; and, more than that, Mr. Wallis would not have been the Mr. Wallis we have known if it had not been for his good wife. We, as directors, knew very well the value of her services, both while she was on the Board for several years, and since. We desired to present them with something which would be useful as well as ornamental, which they will be able to hand down to their children as betokening the respect and esteem in which their parents were held by the directors of the 'Two Worlds' Publishing Company, Limited. Mr. Wallis will leave us with general regret as far as we, personally, are concerned; and we have no doubt he will also feel regret at leaving us. We shall always be glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, and I, speaking personally, shall always be pleased to see and to entertain them.

Mr. W. T. Braham then placed upon the table a silver tea and coffee service, the various articles of which were beautifully chased and of an extremely handsome design. They were arranged upon a tray of polished oak of peculiarly fine grain and unique pattern. Inserted in the centre of the tray was a silver plate, upon which was engraved the following inscription:—

'Presented by the Directors of the 'Two Worlds' Publishing Company, Limited, and a few friends, to Mr. E. W. Wallis (and Mrs. Wallis for her valuable assistance) on his retirement from the Editorship of the 'Two Worlds' paper after twelve years' service (five as Sub-editor and seven as Editor), as a mark of their personal regard and appreciation of his energy and ability.'

THE CHAIRMAN, after reading the inscription, said: Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, in presenting these articles for your acceptance, I hope and trust that you will live many years to enjoy the blessings of life and abundant prosperity.

MR. WM. JOHNSON (Vice-Chairman) said he had known Mr. Wallis a great number of years. In the early days of the movement they had become acquainted, and in all his associations with Mr. Wallis he had always found him true, just, and upright in his work. In regard to Mr. Wallis's connection with the paper, he was its originator. Long before they took the step, Mr. Wallis frequently spoke of the necessity for a people's paper, and by his influence a meeting was called from which the 'Two Worlds' resulted. All along the line he had worked well. Of course, some had found fault, but a man could never do good without this being the case. If he had made mistakes, he was only like all other men. Had it not been for the earnest attention he had paid the paper, it would have been dead long ago.

Mr. Wallis had constantly watched it—it had been his child, and when it came to stand upon its feet it gave him a large amount of joy. He (the speaker) was sorry they were losing Mr. Wallis, but he was going to a larger sphere of labour, and they trusted he would be eminently successful, and that the friendly relations between London and the North would be strengthened.

Brief addresses were also given by Mr. J. B. Tetlow, Mr. J. Pemberton, Mr. J. T. Ward, Mr. W. T. Braham, Mr. R. Fitton, and Mr. A. W. Orr, all of whom expressed warm personal esteem for Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, cordial appreciation of the services which they had rendered to Spiritualism during their residence in Manchester, and earnest wishes for their abundant prosperity in their new sphere of labour.

MR. E. W. WALLIS, in the course of his reply, said: I am glad to-night to hear from you the words of esteem and kindly appreciation of the efforts I have put forth. Of course I have made mistakes, and I have made enemies; but very frequently those enmities arose from misconceptions and misunderstandings. I have done my utmost, with singleness of heart, to honestly serve Spiritualism and make the paper a success; and shall enter upon my new work with as much energy as I have devoted to the 'Two Worlds.' I confidently expect that Mr. Phillips, as my successor, will prove himself to be the right man in the right place. While there are the natural feelings of regret on our part at the separation, we value this kindly expression of your sympathetic and generous feelings to-night, and this token of your esteem in these beautiful and serviceable mementoes. We shall prize them not only because of their intrinsic value but also because of the esteem of which they are tokens. You are all personal friends, and it is hard to say good-bye. Our hearts have been cheered, and we have been encouraged and strengthened by you many times; but

This world is a difficult world indeed,
And people are hard to suit,
And the man who plays on the violin
Is a bore to the man with the flute.

And I myself have often thought
How very much better 'twould be
If every one of the folks that I know
Would only agree with me.

But since they will not, the very best way
To make the world look bright
Is to never mind what people say,
But to do what you think is right.

That Mrs. Wallis and I have ever tried to do, and we shall go on trying. We can only say we have done our best, and what the results may be we leave to the future and to those kind spirit friends who have helped and strengthened us in the past.

MRS. WALLIS then briefly thanked the directors and friends for their kindness. She had always striven to help her husband in his work, and they had been comrades in life more than most. Any hurt to him was a hurt to her, and praise to him was doubly praise to her. None knew better than she did how ardently and faithfully he had worked for the 'Two Worlds'; to it he had given twelve of the best years of his life. She thanked them all, and said that they should endeavour in the future to continue to deserve the kind words and hearty sympathy of those with whom they laboured.

THE CHAIRMAN said they would like to have a few words from their new Editor, and Mr. Phillips briefly intimated his desire to serve the movement through its literature. He felt it was a great work, but that the powers who had called him to it would give him strength to carry it through. It had been urged that he lacked experience; but a man's experience of the requirements of the soul did not commence when he joined any movement, but was a life-long one, and in the board of directors he had as great experience at his back as could be obtained. Mr. Wallis had left him a good example, which he trusted he might be able to follow with some measure of success.

A most harmonious meeting and interesting ceremony were then brought to a conclusion amid the general admiration of the beautiful presentation.

[Our friend Mr. Wallis, whom we have long known and very highly esteem, is about to assume the duties of Secretary of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., Mr. B. D. Godfrey still retaining his position of Librarian. The secretarial work of the Alliance is heavy and will occupy a very large share of Mr. Wallis's attention, while some of his surplus energy will be directed to the promotion of the interests of 'LIGHT.' Both he and his good wife will, we are confident, find in their new sphere ample opportunities for usefulness in various directions, and we sincerely trust that their labours will be as highly appreciated here in the South of England as they have evidently been by our warm-hearted friends in the North.—ED. 'LIGHT.']

A VISITOR FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

BY DR. GUSTAV V. GAJ OF JASKA, CROATIA.

Translated from 'Psychische Studien.'

On February 20th, 1899, I went to Agram on some affairs of business. In the afternoon, as I was sitting in the 'Narodna Kavana' in the Jellacic Platz, a young man of handsome and refined appearance, whom I already knew by sight, came to my table and introduced himself to me as Dr. Vladimir Marn. After the preliminary introduction, he begged to be allowed to join me at my table, when the following conversation took place between us :—

'I hear, Doctor,' began Dr. Marn, 'that you are a great Spiritist.'

'That's as may be,' I answered with a smile; 'here in Croatia I am a great, but elsewhere only a little, Spiritist.'

'Ah well, I will tell you, then, about an experience which occurred to me lately, and which no one has been able to explain to my satisfaction. The doctors will have it that it was a hallucination, but this explanation does not seem to me at all satisfactory. Up to the present time I have been utterly opposed to Spiritism, and I hope you will excuse my saying that I looked upon the whole paraphernalia of Spiritism as nonsense and unworthy the attention of serious men. While I was still a student, I fell in love with a beautiful and amiable girl. My love was returned, but we had to wait seven years before our constant affection conquered every obstacle, and on February 8th, 1897, our union was blessed by the priest. I passed two years of unclouded happiness with this angel, but fate tore us apart and she was separated from me by the stroke of death on January 24th, 1899. My Milka was always delicate, and after the birth of our child she fell into a decline.

'On February 8th, 1899, I went with my father to the cemetery to place a wreath on the grave of my beloved wife, on the second anniversary of our marriage. About half-past seven I returned home, supped as usual, retired to bed at half-past nine, and soon fell asleep.

'I have no idea how long I slept, when I was awakened by a peculiar and most disagreeable sensation. I felt a pressure on my feet, which gradually ascended to my chest. I turned on the other side with my face to the wall, to rid myself of this unpleasant feeling, which then ceased, and I thought must have been caused by nightmare; but soon it began again, and again I turned over, facing the room, when—could it be possible!—I saw, standing a few steps from the bed, the form of my Milka, but not wasted, pale, and wan, as during the last months of her life, but blooming and lovelier than I had ever seen her in life. She wore the wedding dress, in which, too, she was buried. "It must be deception," was my first thought; but no! the vision remained before my gaze. I was seized with a nameless terror, when the phantom, as though to reassure me, smiled and nodded three times with her lovely head, and then—God help me!—drew a step nearer, bent over me, and kissed me on the forehead. I felt distinctly the cold lips touch my forehead, and a cold shudder flew through my veins and marrow. She receded, and, still smiling sweetly, went to the door of the room in which my mother slept with the child, made three times the sign of the cross towards the door, and then vanished. I was completely prostrated, and when I arose in the morning I felt quite weak. As my mother was in the habit of shutting the door about three o'clock so as to keep the room warmer, and as the door was closed when the phantom of my wife made the sign of the cross towards it, it must have been past three in the morning when I saw the vision.

'This is exactly what happened. I cannot think it to have been a hallucination, because when I first awoke I was not thinking in the least about my wife, but simply what could be the cause of the disagreeable sensation I was feeling, and it was only when I turned on my side and suddenly saw the immovable phantom that I was seized with terror. So I can but believe that what I saw was real, and I should be very glad if you could suggest some explanation.'

'Permit me, dear sir,' answered I, 'first of all to beg you to give me your word of honour that this event took place exactly as you have described it; for though I am convinced myself that you would on no account make any joke with

reference to your beloved wife, I wish to be able to certify the truth in this way when mentioning it to other persons.'

Dr. Marn willingly gave me his hand and his word of honour as to the truth of his narrative, at the same time authorising me to make his statement public. Dr. Marn is an 'Advocaturskandidat' in Agram, and lives in Senoa-Gasse, No. 6.

I then explained, to the best of my ability, the nature and cause of such appearances, and advised Dr. Marn himself to study occult knowledge, which would help him to understand in some measure these phenomena.

I think this experience is the more valuable as it comes from a sceptic and outsider.

(Signed) DR. G. V. GAJ.

Jaska, March 3rd, 1899.

MILTON A MEDIUM.

It would probably shock the ordinary orthodox Puritan or Ritualist to be told that Milton was a spirit medium. But what serious and attentive reader of 'Paradise Lost' can fail to perceive that Milton believed himself to be in direct communication with a heavenly muse or spirit who dictated to him in his sleep, if not the whole poem, at least a considerable portion of it? The first book begins with an address to a 'Heavenly Muse,' and in the beginning of the third, Milton speaks of himself as

'Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent' (B. III., l. 20)—

and after a most pathetic lament on his own grievous bodily affliction, total blindness, suddenly bursts into a triumphant strain claiming inward and spiritual vision :—

'So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate: there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.' (l. 51 *et seq.*)

Further on, in Book VII., the poet gives a name to his Heavenly Muse, Urania, and again alluding to his physical misfortunes says :—

'... though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen and evil tongues,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
Purples the East.'

In the introduction to Book IX. the poet again refers to his Heavenly visitor, whom he calls his

'... Celestial Patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse,
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me.'—[l. 21, *et seq.*]

The subject of 'Paradise Lost' Milton thought sufficient in itself to raise and exalt the class of poetry called 'Heroic Song,' unless marred by some defect or disadvantage connected with the personality or environment of the poet :—

'... unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depressed; and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.' [l. 44.]

If the passages quoted from the earlier books admit of the explanation that Milton was merely following the fashion set by Homer and other poets, and that his invocation of the 'Heavenly Muse' was merely poetic ornament, such an explanation will not apply to the later passages.

The earlier poems of Milton and his prose works abound in passages which show how familiar to him was the idea of spirit communication. All good Spiritualists will recognise with reverence and gratitude the testimony which Milton has given in support of the faith they profess, and will feel a peculiar pride and satisfaction in claiming Milton as one of the greatest of spirit mediums.

L. R. B.

LONDON (ELEPHANT AND CASTLE).—'LIGHT' is kept on sale by Mr. Wirbatz, 18, New Kent-road, S.E.

'SPIRITUALISM FOR THE PEOPLE.'

At the first annual meeting of the Onward Spiritualist Association, held on the 10th inst., Mr. Jno. Theo. Audy was re-elected president; Mr. J. T. Dales, treasurer; and Mr. Herbert E. Brown (whose address is 80, Grenard-road, Peckham, S.E.), secretary; while 'Socialist + Spiritualist,' in recognition of his work on the committee, was elected vice-president. Mr. Audy then delivered his first annual presidential address, in the course of which he reviewed the work of the association during the first year of its existence. He said that he did so, not in laudation of that work, but in order to draw renewed attention to the ideas that they had tried to popularise, and also in order to encourage other friends to 'go and do likewise.' He thought the association might certainly claim to be, as a Spiritualist body, unique. For instance, they had never held a single séance. Taking from the beginning as their motto, 'Spiritualism for the People' (a war-cry that had now become pretty well known), they had devoted themselves almost entirely to the interests of Spiritualist propaganda. On three occasions only they had taken up other matters. Recently, for example, they had issued a manifesto in support of the Peace movement. Before that they had passed and published a resolution urging 'the public in general, and Spiritualists in particular, to use only those lucifer matches the manufacture of which is alleged not to affect the health of the workers engaged in the industry.' Again, in connection with the interference, at Oxford, with the right of free speech, the association had done what it could—obtaining, he might say, a recognition of its efforts from the Home Secretary and, from amongst other journals, the two leading Oxford papers and the London 'Daily Chronicle.' Letters of inquiry (one from a gentleman at Oxford University) had been dealt with, and literature distributed that had been sent to the association for that purpose. They had challenged Dr. Stanton Coit, the Ethical leader, to debate the subject of trance-mediumship, and had arranged the discussion, to hear which a very great audience assembled. The appeal of the association, at the end of 1898, to Spiritualists to send the secretary a post-card expressive of their willingness, during the New Year, to bring Spiritualism under the notice of at least one unconverted person, had had results that were extremely satisfactory. In successive manifestoes and letters, the association had advocated a winter 'forward policy' and a summer one. The former was the systematic distribution, on loan or otherwise, of Spiritualist literature from house to house, and the latter the holding of as many meetings as possible in the open-air. Neither of these suggestions, he was happy to believe, had been made in vain; and he held that they were two of the most effective plans for realising the motto of the association, 'Spiritualism for the People.' Concluding, Mr. Audy said that, owing to removals, the number of the association's members had been sadly reduced; and he cordially invited interested Spiritualists living near to join. As for those residing too far away to become members, why should they not form Onward Spiritualist Associations of their own?

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- 'The Photo-Miniature.' A monthly magazine of photographic information. No. 2 is devoted chiefly to 'The Pose in Portraiture.' London: Dawbarn & Ward, Limited, 6, Farringdon-avenue, E.C. Price 6d.
- 'The Review of Reviews,' for May, contains: Portrait of Oliver Cromwell, and reproductions of famous pictures; 'Oliver Cromwell and the National Church'; 'Has War Become Impossible'? 'What Would Jesus Do'? Special Review, by W. T. STEAD, &c. London: 125, Fleet-street, E.C. Price 6d.
- 'The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer (Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche).' By ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, F.S.A. (Scot.), with introductory chapter by ANDREW LANG. Scotland: Eneas Mackay, publisher, 43, Murray-place, Stirling. Price 2s. 6d. net.
- 'Hand Physiognomy;' or, How to read the Character, Talents, Failings, Past, Present, and Future, from the Shape and Lines of the Hands. By IDA ELLIS. Illustrated. The Ellis Family, The Promenade, Blackpool. Price 6d.
- 'Sri the Year Vikari and its Prospects' (1899 and 1900), with the general prospects of the years 1901 to 1905 inclusive. By B. SURYANARAIN ROW, B.A.M.R.A.S. Printed and published at the Aryan Press, Bellary, India. Price one rupee.

THE outer man may act what the inner man thinks, but thinking is acting in the sphere of thought; and the products of thought are transcendently substantial, even if they are not thrown into objectivity on the material plane. The inner man is and does what he desires and thinks.—FRANZ HARTMANN, M.D.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

'Quæstor Vitæ' and F. P. Evans.

SIR,—In 'LIGHT' for April 22nd, 1899, 'Quæstor Vitæ' describes (misdescribes) an experience which he had with the alleged medium Evans, and writes:—

'Considering the striking simplicity of the conditions under which this phenomenon is obtained, and the many attestations confirmatory of its validity that Mr. Evans has published in his book, it is difficult to understand why the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research does not present its European members with a description of this phenomenon.'

As I am chiefly responsible for the work of the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research, it seems to me desirable to state that I regard the account given by 'Quæstor Vitæ' and other similar 'attestations' as entirely valueless, except as misdescriptions of conjuring performances, and I refer the reader again to the discussions on the general subject in the 'Journal,' Society for Psychical Research, for 1886-7, and the articles in Part XI. 'Proceedings,' Society for Psychical Research. If 'Quæstor Vitæ' were to spend a few years in making himself practically acquainted with the trick devices used by fraudulent mediums, he would doubtless become a less incompetent witness than his accounts of Evans prove him to be.

In 'The Liberator' for November 15th, 1898, is an exposure by Mrs. Schlesinger of some of the fraudulent work of Evans. (The name of the paper referred to was changed in January last to 'Garrison's Liberator,' edited by Mrs. Julia Schlesinger and published by Bishop S. Garrison, who was formerly a trickster-medium but has confessed his frauds. The paper is issued at 584, Page-street, San Francisco, Cal., U.S.A.)

Mr. W. E. Coleman, a well-known Spiritualist of San Francisco, independently detected Evans in fraud, and on December 5th, 1898, writes to me: 'I have just filed an affidavit with the State Board of Spiritualists here giving detailed proofs of his frauds.'

I may also refer 'Quæstor Vitæ' to 'LIGHT' for December 1st, 1888, March 16th and 30th, and August 17th, 1889, for the consideration given by 'M. A. (Oxon)' to the question of the exposure of Evans in Australia.

But quite independently of the question whether Evans is a convicted trickster or not, such accounts as those appealed to by 'Quæstor Vitæ' raise not the slightest presumption that the manifestations concerned involved any supernatural power.

RICHARD HODGSON.

5, Boylston-place, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

May 10th, 1899.

'Reincarnation and Divine Justice.'

SIR,—Seeing that the theory of reincarnation rests chiefly upon 'inference,' it is almost a waste of time to argue *pro* or *con*, but it may perhaps be well just to notice the reasoning of 'Excelsior.'

He says, 'Absolute justice cannot be separated from a rational conception of God,' therefore 'any ideal of a Creator who allows the destinies of the created to be subject to caprice or hazard, is fatal to this conception.' 'Excelsior' then remarks upon the inequalities in human nature. 'If men are created equal, why and whence such discordant results?' he asks, and again: 'If no intermediate cause has disturbed original equality, how explain physical, moral, and intellectual degeneracy?' Did 'Excelsior' intend to say *physical*?

Is reincarnation, then, the only way of accounting not only for 'moral and intellectual degeneracy,' but for physical also? Surely that can hardly be, and are there not very many 'intermediate causes' which have disturbed 'original equality'? Intermediate causes, indeed, are so obvious and numerous as to require scarcely a reference. Civilisation, or what passes for such, is responsible for much; heredity may account for still more; while influence from the Unseen may explain the remainder. Does 'Excelsior' remember at what distant period man appeared upon this earth? Has there not been time enough for every conceivable variation to creep in since his first arrival? Is not character transmitted? Have we not bred our vices as well as our virtues? Are not many the innocent victims of ancestral wrong-doing? May not the taint be either moral or physical? Are we not also still largely dominated by propensities of the Animal Kingdom to which we are nearly related? Is there not much of the Tiger, the Bear, the Vulture, the Fox, the Pig, and alas! the Ass, yet with us? Seed may fall on good ground or on bad ground and will behave accordingly. We need not, however, condemn

the Sower as unjust because He will not expect the same yield from each. Is it, however, correct to liken souls unto seeds? Possibly not. May it not be that the life force which is *in and through everything and everywhere* simply awaits certain natural conjunctions to blossom forth in definite or individualised expression, each species bringing forth 'after its kind'? And when to this *rule* there comes a signal and degenerate exception, may it not be referred to a 'fall back'?

God knows better than we how inevitable are sin and suffering during our school days, and how impossible it is to *evolve* character without such discipline. I know not, and care not, whether the theory of reincarnation be true, for I can see no useful purpose that the knowledge would serve to *Spiritualists*, they being already alive to the reality of life beyond the grave, and to the consequences of wrong-doing in the present. I once heard Mr. Leadbeater tell the story of a negro boy possessed of great moral and intellectual gifts, quite unnatural to one of his birth and opportunities, and which were only to be explained, Mr. Leadbeater held, by the fact of reincarnation. Some great soul had been reincarnated in this humble organism. When a soul was ready for a fresh incarnation, a suitable family was selected for its reappearance upon earth. This was so far comprehensible, and it would have been better for his theories had Mr. Leadbeater refrained from telling us, that one sunny day this negro lad's father ate his own wife! Where did the suitability come in, I wonder? The dénouement served rather to upset the conclusions.

'BIDSTON.'

Reincarnation Again.

SIR,—I wonder when the advocates of this very peculiar and unpleasant creed will be as tired of advocating it as I am of reading about it. If I were to apply to their arguments the criticism which they appear to deserve, I am afraid that my language would not be very complimentary; and I will, therefore, content myself by simply inquiring what the law of human progress and growth has to do with the doctrine of reincarnation. We are told that great inequality prevails in life, and that reincarnation is intended to rectify this defect. Indeed! When, where, and how?

If reincarnation is capable of redressing this grievance, it has been singularly unsuccessful in its mission in the past, for this inequality has been persistently rampant in the history of the world from its earliest records to the present day.

But what do we mean by inequality? Has it not its compensations? What kind of inequality is there between the duke in his mansion and the Spitalfields weaver at his loom? The principal difference between the two is only in temporal, worldly, and physical conditions. In other respects the weaver may be the nobler man—far ahead of the coroneted and luxurious aristocrat; and perhaps the duke would gladly barter his gouty constitution and some of his wealth for the wholesome appetite, the good digestion, and the healthy limbs of the farm labourer; and probably his Grace would be still more rejoiced to change places with the weaver in the celestial regions.

In 3000 years has the world made any real progress except in material and civilised conditions? Were not the wise men of old as good and as wise as the men of to-day? In our nineteenth century we boast of 'mowing down like grass' the defenders of their country which we are intent upon possessing; and we slaughter and wound in about two or three hours nearly 30,000 human beings arrayed against us in defence of what they consider their rights! After our victory we proceed to murder the wounded on the battlefield and to desecrate the tombs and bodies of our former foes! Is this method of spreading civilisation supposed to be a reincarnated improvement on the mode of conducting hostilities in the old, unregenerate state of humanity?

Your contributor is facetious over the descriptions given by spirits, in materialistic, mundane language, of houses, trees, games, &c., supposed to exist in the spiritual world; but is there any difficulty in believing in these spiritual realities? And we must bear in mind that spirits express their ideas in language which the denizens of this world can most easily understand.

When I meet with a single fact or argument with sense, reason, and experience in it conclusively in favour of reincarnation, I will gladly and humbly bow down to it; meanwhile, I will venture to give one small piece of advice to the advocates of the doctrine. In the words of the old song, I say: 'Cease your funning.'

I remember when the late Countess of Caithness was alive she was said to be a reincarnation of Mary, Queen of Scots; and on another occasion we were told that the Countess went to Holyrood to have a special interview, or séance with the spirit of Her murdered Majesty. This confusion puts a finishing touch to this controversy.

'TRIDENT,

Crystal Vision.

SIR,—In answer to your request to your readers on Crystal Vision, in 'LIGHT' of May 13th, permit me to say that for seven years I have been developing this gift. The following are two of my late experiences:—

I spoke to you about my gift on the evening when Mr. Wallis lectured, upon his return from America. The next day, in the morning, I could see your form in a bottle of water. I then thought, 'No, it is my husband's father, who passed on a few months since.' Then the gold-rimmed glasses were placed over the eyes, and I decided that it was you, and said to myself, 'I suppose Mr. Dawson Rogers is thinking of me.'

The week before last I could see a dear old friend of mine, and then her mother, who has been dead for many years. I thought, 'Hallie is not well and wants to see me.' A letter arrived on the Monday morning telling me, and so I went to see her, and asked her if she had been thinking of me, when she told me she could not rest until she wrote the letter, and that her husband was vexed at her going out on Sunday to get the postage stamp, he being against spending money on a Sunday.

My own idea is that the visions are thought-pictures, and that by this means we could get thought-photographs. For instance, I know that I see the characters I write about in the crystal, and I believe I could fix them on the sensitive plate for development. If any of your readers care to try the experiment, I am willing to give my time for that purpose, but it must be under strict test conditions.

ELIZABETH ASHTON BINGHAM.

(Medium.)

'The New Tractarianism.'—Midland Spiritual Tract Enterprise.

SIR,—We wish that our distribution of leaflets should reach at least a million. Who will work in this altruistic movement? Large numbers of leaflets have already been spread broadcast, but there is yet work to be done, and we ask all our friends to evince some self-denial and courage. One half-penny per day will secure three tracts, approximately twenty per week (3d.). Who will be brave enough to distribute this number, each one circulating a thousand tracts in the year? So simple and easy is this method of doing good, that young people of both sexes, and even children, may join in the endeavour. I propose a bit of healthy competition, and will present 'ten valuable prizes' at the end of the year, or when the million is reached, to the ten persons who buy and distribute the largest number of tracts. Is there a Spiritualist in the British Isles who can give this aim the cold shoulder of indifference? If the million are issued there will be a balance, after all unavoidable expenses are paid, which balance will be handed to the O.P.S. and B.S.L.U. The amount will probably be small, but it may be sufficient to cause a surprise, in view of the low figure of 3d. for each tract case, and that one-third is doomed before a tract is bought in defraying postage and cost of case. BEVAN HARRIS.

Radcliffe-on-Trent.

SOCIETY WORK.

GROVE-LANE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—On Sunday last an interesting address was delivered by Miss Porter on 'Christ the Good Exemplar,' which was very impressive, and much appreciated by the audience. Messrs. Tubbs and Lovatt gave clairvoyance at the after circle.—H. E. BROWN.

THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—On Sunday morning last, many clairvoyant descriptions were given and recognised at our public circle, which was well attended. In the evening we had an excellent address on 'Pentecost: Then and Now.' On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public circle; at 3 p.m., children's Lyceum; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long, 'The Unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.'—VERAX.

4, MERRINGTON-ROAD, ST. OSWALD'S-ROAD, WEST BROMPTON, S. W.—On Sunday last, Mr. Sherwood gave a short inspirational address, which was followed by several clairvoyant descriptions of which all but one were recognised. These meetings will be discontinued during the summer months as the accommodation is inadequate to the large number who attend, consequently no further meetings will be held until better arrangements can be made.—S.

BRIDGWATER.—On Sunday last we were privileged by a visit from Mrs. A. Vincent Bliss, who, although indisposed, gave an excellent address, followed by clairvoyant descriptions. The expressions of satisfaction at the close fully testified to the appreciation of Mrs. Bliss's generous service, and further visits are pleasurably anticipated. Mr. G. E. Aldridge, of Wolverhampton, also gave a short address in which he clearly and definitely stated the case for Spiritualism as against orthodoxy. We are convinced much good will result from this meeting.—S.P.O.P.